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LOS ANGELES

PROSECUTORS FIGHT DE LOREAN CASE DELAYS

Prosecutors say their case against automaker John De Lorean on drug trafficking charges will come to "a grinding halt" unless a federal judge's sweeping disclosure orders are vacated by an appeals court.

Prosecutor Layne R. Phillips asked Thursday that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco to direct U.S. District Court Judge Robert Takasugi to vacate orders requiring dozens of federal agencies and offices, including the White House, CIA and FBI, to surrender documents on De Lorean.

Phillips' 32-page emergency action said De Lorean's "scattergun" discovery requests from dozens of agencies throughout the nation "will bring the prosecution to a grinding halt."

De Lorean, arrested last October on charges he tried to import and distribute 220 pounds of cocaine, faces the start of his trial next month, but prosecutors fear Takasugi's order could delay the trial for years.

The petition said Takasugi's order "exceeded" the court's authority and insisted that the Freedom of Information Act "was not intended as a device to delay ongoing litigation."

Howard Weitzman, De Lorean's attorney, has indicated the government documents might show the U.S. and British governments collaborated to bring about the automaker's downfall because they were "hostile" to him.

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EXCERPTED